# Castlemaine Naturalist

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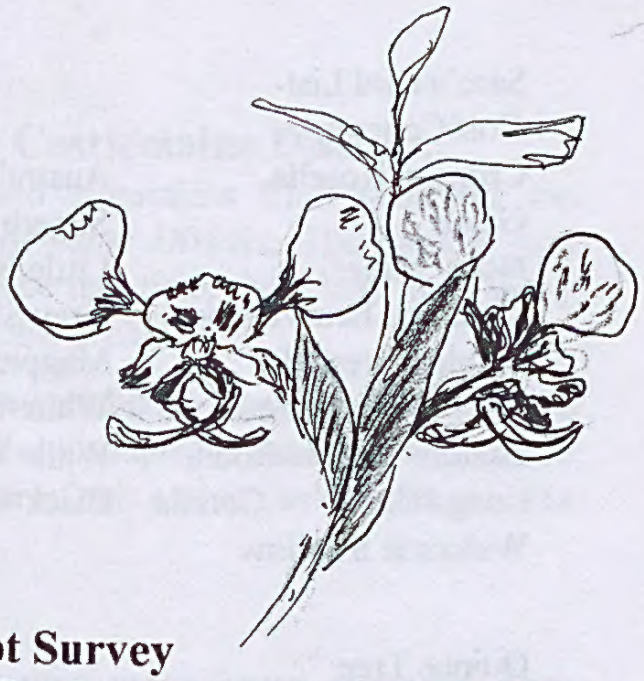

## Swift Parrot Survey

There were five brave souls, including Sam Panter, who joined Debbie Worland at the Golf Course just after 7am on Saturday 4/8. There was quite a number of birds around (Sam's list follows). Though it was frosty it was a beautiful morning, and Debbie took us to the places on the links and just through the fence where the parrots have been seen regularly, but none were confirmed seen. She had lit a fire in their shed cum outdoor living room for us to breakfast in the warmth after our walk over the golf course, and three of us took advantage of this while the Perkins, who'd breakfasted already, went off to the Red, White and Blue Mine, but there were very few birds there, and they met Sam, George Broadway and myself again at the Quince Tree. Once more there were no Swift Parrots, but there were scores of Fuscous Honeyeaters.

There was very little in flower - only a few Yellow Gums and fewer Ironbarks with just a few flowers - so it wasn't surprising that the parrots appeared to have moved on. There wasn't even much sign of Lerp attack.

At 4pm Perkins, Maggie Oliver and myself walked through the area to the north of Sawmill Road (north of town) but it was getting cold, and there was almost nothing around, (or they were well hidden in the leaves!). We did hear the Bell Miners again, though.

Even though no parrots were seen this is still worthwhile, as it gives an idea of their movements during their wintering on the mainland, and when they return to Tasmania. When they do return they cross Bass Strait much faster than the ferry!

We discussed whether the change of time was worthwhile, and decided that we didn't need to be quite so early in the morning, perhaps a 7.30 or 8am start, and the cold change that came across in the afternoon confused the issue too much to be sure whether we should have been earlier or not, but because of the lack of flowering (and Debbie hadn't seen the parrots for a couple of weeks) it was probably a bit hard to judge. Rita Mills

Sam's Bird List-

Golf Course:

Crimson Rosella
Galah
Noisy Miner
Common Bronzewing
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Eastern Yellow Robin
Long-billed Corella
Welcome Swallow
Australian magpie
Superb Fairy-wren (h)
Little Raven
Grey Shrike-thrush
Magpie-lark
White-browed Babbler
Willie Wagtail
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Red Wattlebird
Crested Shrike-tit
Laughing Kookaburra
Musk Lorrikeet
New Holland Honeyeater
?? Swift Parrot
Masked Lapwing (h)
White-plumed Honeyeater

Quince Tree:

Brown Treecreeper
Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella
Galah
Fuscous Honeyeater
Superb Fairy-wren
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Long-billed Corella

Sam Panter

## July at the Golf Course

Debbie Worland is continuing to birdwatch on the Castlemaine Golf Course, but she has reported that there are not great numbers of any birds at the moment. Apparently there is a big "clean up and burn up" going on which means the heaps of trimmings that the Wrens were nesting in have been burnt, branches of trees and whole shrubs have been removed, and the grass where the quails were has been mowed - though unless you are a wild shot the golf ball shouldn't ever go near that area. So, sadly, healthy bird habitat is being sacrificed to manicured man habitat. Ed.

Lots of Spotted and Striated Pardalotes are still around. One Swift Parrot was seen on the 16th of July, but the Grey-crowned Babbler has not been seen since May 9. Brown Treecreepers are often seen, a Nankeen Night Heron has been seen near the dam, Grey Teal and Hoary Headed Grebes have been on the dams, and Black-chinned Honeyeaters are feeding in the blossom. The surviving White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike is still near the 17th tee.

Debbie Worland.

IF YOU HAVE A GORSE PROBLEM - Darren Bos, the Shire Environmental Projects Officer, has given prior notice for a **Gorse information day to be held on Sept. 27**. The day will primarily look at biological control options.

Details of the day are not yet confirmed, but Darren is hopeful that he can provide us with more information closer to the date. Hopefully we will know more by the General Meeting night.

## Common Orchids of the Castlemaine District.

In August 1990, the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club published the booklet *Common Orchids of the Castlemaine District.* The booklet was written and illustrated by Rita Mills. Since that time, there have been many changes to the names to identity of the local orchids.

In a number of places in Rita's noted the variability of some orchids that are now considered to be separate species. For example "....the front of the hood is often red- brown....", and " the colour of this orchid can vary from white to deep pink"

Some of the changes are given below.

**Scented Sun Orchid** is now *Thelymitra megcalyptra* (changed from *Thelymitra nuda.*). This is one in a string of name changes for this orchid.

**Pink Fingers.** Two species and a variety are now recognised for the district.

Dusky Caladenia (*Caladenia fuscata*) flowers in early spring. It is covered externally by dark brown glandular hairs, and the tongue (the labellum) has a forward-pointing triangular extension.

Pink Fingers (*C. carnea*) begins to flower later in spring. It does not have the forward-pointing extension to the labellum, and the exterior of the flowers is greenish to pink.

Ornate Pink Fingers (*C. carnea* var *ornata*) is much less common. The bright red labellum has darker bars, and the lateral sepals are often fused.

**Blue Caladenia** is now *Cyanicula caerulea* var *caerulea* (changed from *Caladenia caerulea* var *caerulea*). It is of interest that Blue Caladenia is no longer a *Caladenia.*

**Greencomb Spider Orchids.** There are now at least two species recognised.

Brown-clubbed Spider Orchid (*Caladenia phaevoclavia*) is the most common of the local greencombs. It is usually fairly short, growing to 25 cm or less.

Mantis Orchid (*Caladenia tentaculata*) is spectacular orchid. The stem is to 50 cm. It has a large green mobile "comb" which has long teeth.

**Onion Orchids.** Notched Onion Orchid (*Microtis arenaria*) also grows in the district. It is distinguished from Common Onion Orchid by the pointed upturned tip of the dorsal sepal and the deflexed labellum which has a bilobed apex.

**Midge Orchids.** Field identification is difficult because of the tiny flowers, and past records may be unreliable. Four species have been recorded. Identification features of these orchids include:

Variable Midge Orchid (*Genoplesium archeri*). Few-flowered; flowers greenish; oblong labellum with upturned tip and hairy margins.

Fringed Midge Orchid (*G. ciliatum*). Few flowered; flowers greenish-yellow with reddish, sparsely hairy labellum.

Sharp Midge Orchid (*G. despectans*). Common; dark-coloured; usually many flowered (up to 40); nodding flowers with sharp-pointed segments; labellum sharp-pointed and hairless.

Dark Midge Orchid (*Genoplesium* sp affin *rufum*). An unnamed species. Widespread; dark reddish-brown flowers; narrow labellum which widens slightly along its length and then contracts abruptly to a curved apex.

**Hyacinth Orchids.** There are at least two species the district. They were included in *Dipodium punctatum.*

Rosy Hyacinth Orchid (*Dipodium roseum*). Common. Flowers are pale pink with darker pink spots. Labellum is pink with prominent darker stripes and dark pink hairs.

Pale Hyacinth Orchid (*D. pardalinum*). Has much paler flowers which fade to white. The labellum is white with darker strips and coarse white hairs.

Purple Hyacinth Orchid (*Dipodium punctatum)* may also occur. Its petals are not curved back.

**Common Bird Orchid** is now *Chiloglottis valida* (changed from *C. gunnii*).

**Tiny Greenhoods.** There are two similar species

Tiny Greenhood (*Pterostylis parviflora*) has narrow green and white flowers. The sinus protrudes.

Red-tip Greenhood (*Pterostylis* sp affin *parviflora*) is another orchid not yet named. It has brown petals and brown markings on the ends of the lateral sepals. The sinus does not protrude.

**Tall Greenhoods.** There are again two local species.

Tall Greenhood (*Pterostylis melagramma,* formerly *P. longifolia*). This is early flowering, and less robust than Emerald-tip Greenhood. The labellum is greenish to yellow, with a darker central ridge.

Emerald-tip Greenhood (*Pterostylis smaragyna*) flowers some weeks later than Tall Greenhood. The labellum is green with a darker green ridge. It is also more distinctly striped than Tall Greenhood.

**Diuris Orchids.** Most have changed names, and an additional species is recognised.

Leopard Orchid (*Diuris pardina,* formerly *D. maculata*)

Golden Moths (*Diuris chrysoeopsis,*). It has had two name changes since 1989. The superseded names are *D. lanceolata* and *D. pedunculata.*

Golden Cowslips (*D. behrii*) was included with Golden Moths. It is larger than Golden Moths, and has a more heavily striated flowers and a large dorsal sepal. It flowers some weeks later than Golden Moths.

There are probably other changes about which I am not aware.

Ern Perkins

## Plant and Bird Identification in Western Queensland

During a visit to Queensland last month, these books were found to be useful in identifying the local plants.

*Plants of Western New South Wales*, Cunningham, Mulham, Milthorpe and Leigh (Soil Conservation Service of NSW, 1981). This magnificent book has coloured photographs and descriptions of most of the plants of western New South Wales. Plants do not know about state boundaries, and the book is useful in northern Victoria and southern Queensland. If taking only one book, this book would be the one selected.

*Flora of Central Australia* ed. John Jessop (Reed, 1981). The flora is more technical than *Plants of Western New South Wales.* It is comprehensive, has good descriptions and keys, and many line drawings. It was used constantly.

*Field Guide to the Eucalypts vol. 3* Brooker and Kleinig (Intaka, 1984). This volume covers the eucalypts of northern Australia. It is comprehensive, with coloured photographs of all known species, with descriptions and distribution maps. It made eucalypt identification easy.

*Native Trees and Shrubs of South-eastern Australia* Leon Costermans (Rigby 1981). Western Queensland is out of the area covered by this magnificent book. It is useful for those southern species that also grow in Queensland.

The common field guides used in Victoria cover all of Australia, and any of these serves well in Queensland.

E Perkins

## Observations

• Natalie de Maccus reported watching two Choughs beak to beak in combat on top a wire frame of a tree guard. The combat continued until one Chough fell inside the guard, which fortunately was not very high, so the fallen Chough was able to get out again.

• Craig Moody reported that Magpies and Treecreepers are nesting already at Redesdale. He also told of young Weeping Cassinia (Coffee Bush, Chinese Scrub) being knocked by frost.

• Richard Piesse of Glenluce has a lone Little Pied Cormorant as a permanent resident on his dam on the Helge track.

• The Superb Fairy-wrens at Chris Morris' place at Little Bendigo are exhibiting courting behaviour.

• Some of the travellers reported seeing lots of Black-shouldered Kites; Margaret Badminton found them common at Menindie, and Ken and Maureen Dredge saw numbers of them on their trip to Queensland.

• On Tuesday 14/8 two Masked Lapwings chicks were seen feeding near the parents in Blakeley Road. Their colouring and markings were similar to the parents, but the plumage was still rather fluffy. Rita Mills

• 30 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos seen in Kalimna by Nicholas Taylor.

• Barbara Maund has had a Grey Fantail in her garden in Kennedy Street.

• Brenda Envall reported a large flock of Straw-necked Ibis feeding in the paddocks at Harcourt.

• A Brown Quail seen along the railway reserve at Barkers Creek, 18/8. There was also much wattle in flower, including masses of Golden and Silver Wattle. The Early Black Wattle was also a mass of shining gold in the dull, winter bush. Rita Mills

• On Saturday 25/8, Fantail Cuckoo calling, Barkers Creek. Rita Mills

FROM THE BUSINESS MEETING, 23/8/01

THE ROADSIDE CLEANUP was again a success. As some members had picked up some of the more obvious rubbish sometime over the past few weeks as they have been passing, and with a good attendance on the morning of 11/8, we were all finished in the hour.

THE BROOM PULL had a good roll-up of helpers on the first day. Unfortunately the kind of weather which is good for the natives plants to propagate is also good for the South African ones, and there were thousands of seedlings of both Cape and Flax-leaf Broom. The second Pull a week later had fewer helpers, but good inroads into removing the new seedlings has been made. Peter Johnson of DNRE and Darren Bos, the shire's Environmental Projects Officer called in to see what progress was being made and to offer more help where they can.

**On Wed. Sept. 12, at 2pm.,** Peter Johnson will be bringing a TAFE group down from Bendigo to continue with the **Broom Pull**, and anyone who can

join them is asked to do so for part of the afternoon at least. He is also working with us to finalize the wording of the signs which will be erected in due course.

THREATENED SPECIES The Club has been asked to mount a display in the Library from 6 - 9 Sept.

THE BOX/IRONBARK REPORT is out. It is available from DNRE in Hargraves St. for $10 if you want one.

INVITATION - The Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat as sent an invitation to the annual **Stella Bedgegood Memorial Lecture**, to be held at Ballarat, at the Ballarat Horticulture Centre, corner of Gillies and Gregory Sts, Ballarat on Friday Oct. 5 2001 at 8pm. The **guest speaker** will be **Professor Ian Plimer**, Professor of Geology at University of Melbourne. The subject is **"The History of the Earth in 45 Minutes".**

ANGAIR WILDFLOWER SHOW AND ART SHOW - will be held in the Memorial Hall McMillan St., Anglesea on Sat. and Sun. 22 and 23 Sept. from 10 am to 5 p.m. Admission includes guided walks and bus tours to visit nearby bushland and flora reserves, leaving at regular intervals between 11 and 4 on Saturday and 11 and 3 on Sunday.

**MARYBOROUGH FNC 50TH ANNIVERSARY.** Past Members, friends and supporters of the club are invited to join the celebration on Sat. Sept. 22. at their Clubrooms, Dundas Road, Maryborough. The Program is - 11am, Bush Walk; 12 pm, BBQ lunch; 2 - 4pm; formal proceedings followed by afternoon tea. You are invited to join in all or part of the celebrations.

RSVP; 12 Sept. - Brian Johns (Sec.) ph. 5461 2775, Lorraine O'Dal (Pres.) ph. 5460 5799 (AH) or write PO Box 62, Maryborough, 3465. Reply slips available - ring Rita 5472 4553 (AH).

NEW MEMBER - Welcome to Richard Piesse of Glenluce.

## 2001 Box-Ironbark Camp
## Paddys Ranges State park, Maryborough
### Saturday and Sunday Oct. 6 - 7

This is a VNPA camp, supported by Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, Maryborough Field Naturalists Club and the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs. The program includes - workshops, field experiences, guest speakers, storytelling spotlighting and live music. There is the choice of a day walk in the Paddys Ranges or short walks on Sunday.
Catering is available, campsites are free. Day visitors welcome.
**Please register before Monday Sept. 24. A registration form is available, with details of the camp, and how to get there.**

## PROGRAM

**General Meetings** are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) hall, at 8.00pm on the second Friday of each month, except January.

**Excursions** leave promptly at times stated, usually on the Saturday after the general meeting. There are NO excursions on TOTAL FIRE BAN days. **Also note** that outdoor events are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.

**Business Meetings** are held at 27 Doveton Street on the 4th Thursday of each month, except December, at 7.30pm. All members are invited to attend.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO CLUB MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS

Fri. Sept. 14, **Nicaragua.** speaker is Neil Norris. UCA hall, 8pm.

Sat Sept. 15. **Terrick Terrick.** All day outing Leave 27 Doveton St. at 10 am. Take morning and afternoon tea, lunch, and a drink as well as binocs etc. Leader M. Oliver

**Wednesday Wildflower Walks.** Meet at 27 Doveton St. at 4pm. We are usually back in town by 5.30. Leaders: Sept. 19 Margaret Panter, Sept. 26 Geraldine Harris, Oct. 3, Stuart Morris, Oct. 10 John Cole.

Sat Sept. 22 **Maryborough FNC 50th Anniversary**. See p7

Thurs. 27 - Sun 30 Sept. **Club Campout at Paradise Gardens (Redman Bluff ) Camping Ground,** Long Gully Road, Pomonal. Leader Rita Mills.

Sat. - Sun. Oct 6-7 **2001 VNPA Box-Ironbark Camp,** Paddys Ranges, Maryborough. See p7.

Fri. Oct. 12. **Logging in Victoria** Speaker is Marcus Ward. 8pm UCA hall.

Sat Oct. 13 **Cobaw Forest.** Leave 13 Mostyn St. at 1.30pm sharp.

Fri. 26 - Tue. 30 Oct. **VFNCA Campout at Hall's Gap.**

Fri. Nov. 9. **Farming with the Future in View**. Geraldine and Geoff Harris will tell us what they are doing for conservation and farming on their property at Barkers Creek.

Sat Nov. 10 A look around the **Harris Property**. Leave 23 Mostyn St. at 1.30 sharp. Take afternoon tea.

Fri. Dec. 14. **Members and Visitors night** Your night to bring the club a short talk, a few slides, a book review, etc., etc. Start thinking!

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**Disclaimer** - The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the club.

**2001 Committee** E. Perkins (President) ph 5472 3124, C. Morris (V.P. and Grievance Officer), G. Broadway (Sec.). ph. 5472 2513, J. Turnbull (treas.) ph. 5474 3005, R. Mills (N/L Ed. and P.O.), M. Dredge, M. Oliver, B. Maund, B. Envall.

**Subscriptions for 2001** -

Ordinary Membership: Single ,$22 Family, $30 Pensioner or student: Single $19 Family $24 Supporting: $31

The subscription also covers postage of the 'Castlemaine Naturalist'.

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